



For Immediate Release
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FINANCE COMMITTEE APPROVES SIX NOMINATIONS

*Panel approved six nominees for positions at the IRS, U.S. Tax Court,
Treasury Department and USTR*

Washington, DC – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) and fellow Finance Committee members approved six nominations at an open executive session today. The nominations approved by the panel will now move to the full Senate for confirmation. The approved nominations follow here:

- Mr. Ed Eck, to be a Member of the Internal Revenue Service Oversight Board at the U.S. Department of the Treasury
- Mr. Richard T. Morrison, to be a Judge of the United States Tax Court
- Mr. David D. Gustafson, to be a Judge of the United States Tax Court
- Ms. Elizabeth Crewson Paris, to be a Judge of the United States Tax Court
- The Honorable Eric M. Thorson, to be Inspector General, at the U.S. Department of Treasury
- The Honorable Deanna Tanner Okun, to be Deputy United States Trade Representative within the Executive Office of the President, upon enactment of S.J.Res 38, a resolution removing a statutory bar to her confirmation.

The opening remarks regarding nominations that Baucus delivered at the markup follow here.

“Today, we will consider the nominations of Richard Morrison, David Gustafson, and Elizabeth Paris, to be Judges on the U.S. Tax Court, Eric Thorson, to be Treasury Inspector General, and Ed Eck, to be a member of the IRS Oversight Board.

“We will consider Senate Joint Resolution 38, in connection with the nomination of Deanna Okun, to be Deputy U.S. Trade Representative. And we shall consider the Okun nomination, contingent on the enactment of S.J. Res. 38.

“The increasing complexity of the tax laws demands the appointment of highly skilled judges to the bench. Mr. Morrison, Mr. Gustafson, and Ms. Paris each bring with them a combination of government and private sector work in the tax field. I am confident that their experience and extensive knowledge make them well-suited to be judges on the Tax Court.

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“Mr. Thorson has proven to be tough and fair in his current position as Inspector General of the Small Business Administration. Before that, he served for both the Senate Finance Committee and the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. I believe his wide-ranging experience will help him be fair and impartial as he carries out his duties as the Treasury Inspector General.

“Ed Eck brings with him 30 years of experience with the tax laws, as a practitioner, as an Assistant U.S. Attorney, and as an academic. Over the past 30 years, Ed Eck has looked at the tax laws from all sides. And I believe that this vast array of experience will make him a valuable member of the IRS Oversight Board.

“Deanna Okun also brings a wealth of experience to the position for which she has been nominated — the Deputy U.S. Trade Representative. She served as a trade and foreign policy aide to former Senator and Finance Committee Member Frank Murkowski. And she currently serves as Commissioner of the International Trade Commission, where she oversees the enforcement of U.S. trade remedies laws.

“I have long urged USTR to beef up its enforcement efforts. I hope that Ms. Okun will use her enforcement experience at the International Trade Commission to deal with the challenging enforcement issues that confront USTR, especially at they relate to China and Korea. I look forward to working with her in this capacity.

“Committee counsel advises, however, that the Trade Act of 1974 bars Ms. Okun’s nomination. That act prohibits individuals who previously represented a foreign government in specified matters from serving as USTR or Deputy USTR.

“To help move Ms. Okun’s nomination forward, Senator Grassley introduced the joint resolution — S.J. Res. 38 — that is before this Committee today. That resolution waives application of this statutory bar with respect to Deanna Okun.

“The Finance Committee passed a similar resolution to approve Charlene Barshefsky as USTR during the Clinton Administration. I support passage of this resolution and urge other Senators on the Committee to do so, as well.

“After the Committee considers S.J. Res. 38, the Committee will order the Okun nomination reported, upon enactment of that joint resolution. Thus, the Committee will hold its votes today. But we will only formally report the Okun nomination to the calendar upon enactment of the joint resolution that makes doing so in order.”

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